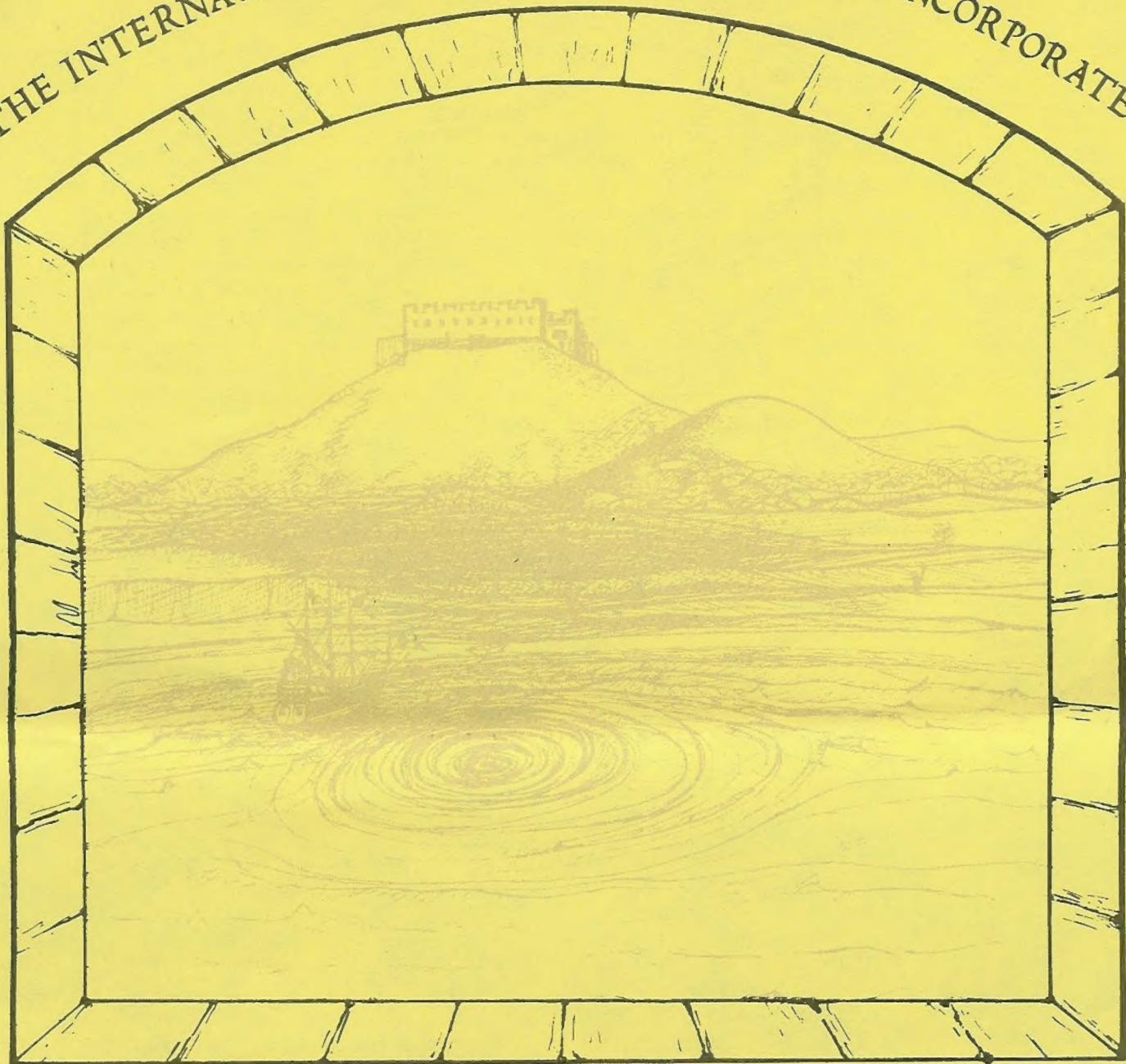


THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF MARTINISTS INCORPORATED

Worthing - Barbados - West Indies



PLANE III  
LIBER 26

GRADE: *COMPANION*  
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DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT AND MYSTICAL ENLIGHTENMENT OF MAN

### ANSWERS TO THIRD COLLEGE EXAM

1. "The mysteries or the Mystery, that is the question" - whether it is appropriate or not to twist Shakespeare like this, or to quote Eliphas Levi; "The greatest Mystery of infinity is the existence of He to whom alone everything is without mystery", it is a way to describe my concept of the mysteries and the Mystery in a nutshell. There are lesser mysteries, but one Mystery behind and beyond them all. This fundamental Mystery means all to me, for there is nothing outside of It so I am myself within It and It is within me. This Mystery knows no time and no dimensions, or, rather, all "time" and all "dimensions", for It simply **is**. Name It God, name It whatever, it changes nothing, for It is eternity, It is the cosmos, It is the reason behind all reasons man can perceive or think of, the ultimate and intangible, yet so close, so close - yea closer to my Self than am I! Therefore I can experience the realness and **presence** of this Mystery when reaching within or when looking without and sense like an extatic rapture Its light, power and depth, Its life, love and beauty. Such experience leaves me rich beyond all measure and the cup of my heart and soul is filled beyond borders, to overflow completely... and the taste of this wine, how could I describe? The veil before my eyes has become translucent and I have beheld splendours of unspeakable power and beauty, so I have certain knowledge of things that are beyond words. Still, such knowledge has hit me hard, clearly pointing out my weakness, my errors and my limitations. Therefore I know also that I have a lot of work to do, work that I am not yet ready for, but preparing for. One may come to think that one has made a good part of the distance when things opens up, then only to realize that the Path is a never ending one, a realization that may induce a feeling of despair. I have since long come to understand that every step I make along the Path is a step preparing for steps that are not even yet in sight, so against what am I to compare my progress or whith what instrument do I plot my position on the seas of eternity? Truly, I know not how far I have progressed nor the exact position of my ship, for the horizon is heaven and sea in all directions, so all I can do is follow the Sun. And meeting with strong currents and high winds I will learn to sail...
2. The purpose of occult study is to help the student towards at-one-ment by personal, individual effort. That is to say that occult study is a system of training or a step-by-step method, intended to accelerate the development of the student, to permit him to reach into the mysteries of his own nature, develop his higher faculties and to guide him making use of his faculties in his quest for Light, so he may become a **knowing** being. Through occult study, the student will, if he persevere, develop mastery of himself and his environment, bringing it all consciously under spiritual control, attaining by degrees continuous and concious union with the Higher Self. Then he will also experience attunement and union with the Divine, the profoundest mystical experience, and prepare to serve the Will of God.

(As submitted by a student-member)



Dear Brothers & Sisters:

Our self-study has revealed in us the presence of some higher principles and functions which distinguish us from the animals, to whom our physical being relates us. It also reveals another distinctive character: the fact that we are able to study, analyse and judge ourselves. Man is thus a dual being, partaking of both the angelic and the animal..

What conclusions will Saint-Martin reach from the combination of Man's two streams of experience? With Pascal, he comes to the conclusion that the principle of the Fall of Man, or original sin, offers a better solution to our difficulties than the speculations of philosophers.

Saint-Martin uses here, in his book "Ecce Homo", a play on words to express a shade of meaning he finds important: "Through the realization of our greatness, we arrive at the conclusion that if we are not GOD-THOUGHT, we are at least 'THOUGHTS OF GOD.'"

The first expresses the idea of thought imbued with the power of God, in other words: an emanation with the power of creation. The second implies that we exist as a result of thought in the mind of God ... in other words: that we are at the receiving end of the emanation. Man, therefore, is not a creative force emanating from God but the result of such an emanation.

Saint-Martin says, therefore: "Through the realization of our Greatness we come to the conclusion that ... if we are not GOD-THOUGHT, we are at least THOUGHT OF GOD. Through the realization of our dreadful plight, we can form an idea of the happy state we have known previously."

Pascal has said: "Who is unhappy not to be king ... but a king deprived of his throne?" and Saint-Martin echoes the same feeling: "If Man has not anything more, it is because he had everything."

On the other hand, whether we feel it intuitively in our primordial faculty, or whether we infer it from our present poverty ... we have the certainty of our sublime origin. Yet, we have that very poverty at present. *Nothing but a doctrine based on the Fall can explain the passing from the first estate to the second.* Just as we have acquired a notion of primordial bliss and just as we cannot escape the reality of the misery in which we are now, so must we admit transition, either sudden or gradual, from one state to the other. This is the principle of the Fall of Man.

We come now to the conclusion of Saint-Martin's philosophy, the substance of which, you will remember, has been passed down from the far past in the bosom of a secret Initiatic Society ... a Society manifesting throughout the ages under different names, at different times, in different places.

Let us now examine for the last time the path of spiritual evolution that is entered ... when Man, by looking around him, but most of all within himself, comes to the realization of a first and sublime estate from which he has been exiled. It is the analysis of this sublime estate which made Man so great and so happy ... that constitutes the third stage of Saint-Martin's dialectic.

Let us now see our Master's last analysis:

- 1) Man is a god ! A truth !
- 2) How can Man, that god, that wonderful being ... languish in opprobrium and debility?
- 3) How can Man find himself in such a condition of ignorance, weakness and misery ... were it not for the fact that he has become separated from the very principle which is the Unique Light and sole support of all Beings.

With the principle of the Fall once accepted, it is obvious that the aim of Man ... who, says Saint-Martin, "is fixed to this earth like Prometheus to his rock" ... must be to reconquer and re-enter his First Estate.

**But have we the means of finding the Lost Paradise?**

We know how man was thrown out. The description of this Eden would show, says our Master, "that it is designed with such wisdom that by retracing *his steps* along the same path which led him downwards to exile ... Man can be sure of returning to the Central Point, which is the only place where he can find strength and rest." (E.& T.)

The dialectic of Martinism rests therefore on a threefold proposition which is:

**THEISIS - ANTITHESIS - SYNTHESIS**

and which Martinists translate as

**ORIGINAL FELICITY (of a First Estate) - FALL - REINTEGRATION**

Man, who has been called a "Spiritual Minor" ... a term we shall find again soon ... has found his destiny (to attempt reintegration) to be by way of a logical process of analysis, which could be said to duplicate his own evolution.

Every man must therefore discover *in his own mind*, the Eternal Saga of Man.

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DISCUSSION

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Brothers & Sisters ... the aspect we have shown you represents in a way the intellectual approach.. It must not be considered as the whole of the Martinism of Saint-Martin but it is the only part that can be studied rationally. The purely mystical aspect of the Quest can neither be taught nor described but must be DISCOVERED in each one's own heart.

( Please pause, reread and inwardly digest before proceeding )

The Martinism of Saint-Martin, has been called a mystical system and Saint-Martin is himself considered a mystic. This is correct, but the term 'mystic' is sometimes understood in different ways. In the sense generally considered as the oriental sense ... or Hindu conception ... 'mysticism' describes a state of union with God or the Absolute. The same word, however, is also used to describe the technique or method by which such a state of union is achieved.

These techniques, although directed to the possession of an entirely spiritual and abstract condition may however verge on the physical, as we can see from the method known as Hatha Yoga.

"Mysticism", therefore, is taken in two ways:

- 1: To designate a STATE of Nirvana or Illumination, or of union with the Absolute.
- 2: To describe the discipline and the way to be followed, to achieve such a state.

In Martinist terminology, we call the state "REINTEGRATION" and the method "THE INNER WAY."

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Unfortunately, many mystics and so-called mystics, have been so divorced from earthly realities that their work is surrounded by an impenetrable haze which has helped to discredit the adjective "mystical" in the public mind ... by associating it with anything that is irrational or weird.

The French author Balzac wrote of certain mystical writings:

"They are written without method, without eloquence, and their terminology is so baroque that we may read a thousand pages of Madame Guyon, of Swedenborg and particularly of Jacob Boehme, without understanding a single thing. Do you wish to know why? Simply because in the eyes of these believers, everything had already been proved."

We note that Balzac does not include Saint-Martin among those hazy writers. Saint-Martin was a man with strong spiritual aspirations but he always supported his principles with philosophical arguments, presented in a logical manner. In a letter to Willermoz, dated February 3, 1784, he wrote:

"As for the two doors, that of the Heart and that of the Mind, I believe the first one is by far to be preferred, particularly if one is fortunate enough to be gifted in that respect. But one should not stop there, especially when one has to talk to people who only have the door of the

Mind barely ajar and one must be very conscientious about this aspect of the Teaching until the light comes."

THE PART OF THE TEACHER ENDS THERE. The Initiate, having absorbed through the **intellectual approach** those principles which form the rational part of the Doctrine ... is then left to open his Heart through his own will and desire.

Those who are privileged to lead you into Martinism cannot take you any further.

That is why the spoken lecture on the Teaching can remain but a theory. THE REST OF THE WORK IS UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL ... UP TO YOU. You will, however, find help of a more subtle nature in the ritual work sincerely undertaken and in the exercises of meditation and contemplation already given you, and which you are always reminded to practice.

We shall conclude this brief study of the philosophy of Saint-Martin with a word of hope for those who find the goal so far away ... and apparently unattainable ... and who despair of ever reaching it.

The Way of Reintegration, like all other ways, requires a **voluntary decision** from the Man of Desire who STARTS on the Path. Such a decision, however, is already a form of realization, for it is said that the will to identify oneself with God is in itself a grace of God.

Let us take courage and inspiration then, my Brothers & Sisters, from this beautiful thought of Pascal, with which we shall close this convective:

"Tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne m'avais déjà trouvé."

"THOU WOULDST NOT SEEK ME IF THOU HADST NOT ALREADY FOUND ME." !

May you ever dwell in the Eternal Light of Divine Wisdom.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Dear Companions;

Over the past few Libers we have been presenting that portion of the Martinism of Saint-Martin that can be studied. As was stated just now, the purely mystical aspect must be discovered by each person.

In the next Liber we will begin to examine the Martinism of Martinez Pasquales.

I am sure that you have long ago realized that "truth", "right and wrong", "good and bad", &c ...are not concepts that can be as clearly delineated and defined as many people seem to think they may be, but rather ... these are things each person must determine for themselves.

Certainly the self-study you are undertaking and the analysis of the ideas that come to you, whether they be from your "head"(mind),

or the "heart"(emotional self) ... must be making you conscious of your behaviour and your attitude. We hope these lessons are causing you to discover things about yourself that you had not noticed before and that whether you call it reintegration, salvation, nirvana or whatever ... you know now what the goal is ... that its attainment is in your own hands ... and you are on the way to becoming a New Man.

Regarding the ritual work mentioned above: we have two useful rituals for home use. One was released by the Union of Martinist Orders and the other is a collection of prayers of the Elus-Cohen, translated from manuscripts in the Jean-Baptiste Willermoz collection at the Municipal Library, Lyon, France. They are listed in our Supply Bureau .

Companions: allow me to congratulate you on the progress you are making. Your mystical and spiritual development we cannot judge ... but your intellectual comprehension we can! Following is the first of a 3 part exam for the College's Certificate of Proficiency. We hope all Associates will participate.

May that Peace which passes all human understanding, abide with you.

Sincerely,



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#### CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY

The examination for this Certificate will be divided into three parts. The first will be to do with the ideas of Saint-Martin. The second on those of Martinez Pasqualez; and the third will be general. We will require an overall average of 90%. Associates who fail the first time will be required to do the exam over.

Please write or type clearly, give your name and key number, and write on one side of the paper only. Head the paper Proficiency Exam No. 1. (You can submit each exam paper separately, or send them all in together.)

#### Proficiency Exam No. 1

- 1: What is Martinism?
- 2: What is the aim of Martinism?
- 3: How does Martinism propose to achieve these aims?
- 4: What do you think of Initiation?
- 5: Who inspired Saint-Martin?
- 6: What is Man's most important endeavour?
- 7: Where does the secret to each person's own progress lie?
- 8: How can Man hope to know himself?
- 9: What does self-study reveal?
- 10: What is the most essential virtue in practising self-study?
- 11: What study does Saint-Martin advocate?
- 12: What does this reveal?

- 13: What are the three phases of Man's realization of Self?
- 14: What need arises out of the realization of the Fall of Man?
- 15: Explain what is meant by The Inner Way.

Good Luck !

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Companions:

#93

Who are the "builders of tomorrow" ... and why? These are the questions many of the more thoughtful are asking themselves these days and the answers will vary according to each questioner's individual outlook and attitude toward life. Some will give political reasons why this or that nation will be responsible for the future and its results, whereas others will advance religious, philosophic, racial, scientific or sociological answers. They will, each and all, depend *solely upon the individual view-point*. Each considers his answers, his attitude and his theory to be the "right" ones ... (otherwise he would not hold them). Yet all the answers will be different Who or which is right?

One group will assure us quite vigorously that if the totalitarian way of life triumphs ... liberty and freedom are doomed. Another group will claim that unless Christianity and all that it symbolizes is re-awakened in the heart of man the world is doomed and the future is lost in darkness. Yet another group will assure us, oh so positively, that science has the future of man in its care and that continued progress is inevitable because, as man gains in understanding of the mysteries of life, the standard of living is improved and raised to higher levels. Therefore, science is to be the sole arbiter of the future. And so on. Each group claims to have the only authentic and authorized solution to our problems and the key to our future welfare. Again: Which group is right?

Is it not a fact that all groups of people in life, generally speaking, feel that they hold the solution to all of life's problems ... if only they could get a sufficient number of people to think as they think? Does this claim not sound familiar?

Is it not true that different religious bodies believe and claim that their system is the only truth, or the only expression of truth? Is it not true that different governments claim that theirs is the only sound form of real government? Is it not true that different schools, universities and even businesses assert that "their way is the 'better way'?" Is it not true that certain races claim that theirs is the superior race? Why is this? There must be a fundamental reason for these conflicting states of mind and opinions in all creeds, races and individuals.

At the present time, groups of men, known as nations, are seeking ... forcibly ... to impose their way of life upon other groups. Why is this? Because they believe "their way" (whatsoever it may be) is better ... and should be imposed upon others. Again: Why is this?

Is it not because all men know that tomorrow will be what they make of it today ... and each group wants tomorrow to be just what each individual of the group thinks it should be? In other words: people

believe that the world will go to ruin unless what they have come to believe in, and stand for, is preserved. Again and again we ask: Why is this so? You - me - this organization - and lots of others - could give many answers ... all of them particularly true, but the fundamental reason for this chaos of attitudes is a spiritual one.

When we discard our physical body at so-called "death" what have we left? We have an etheric counterpart and an astral counterpart, a mental sheath and the Divine Spark, or Ego. How well we utilize these other bodies immediately after the "great change" depends upon our spiritual consciousness and development. It is just the same as on the physical plane. Some people go through life without really living ... simply drifting ... having no objective or plan to their lives. We might well call them "life drifters." *Do you believe that an entity, which in the course of its incarnation, has not taken an active interest in its surroundings and has not made it a point to participate in the important constructive work that is going on in this world ... will be any different when it passes to another world?* That lack of aliveness and interest is due to the individual himself and not to his surroundings. When he passes over to the "other side" ... to reality ... he is not going to be any more AWARE than he was on earth.

I am not now referring to physical defectives but to individuals who are endowed with all their faculties but who are spiritually lazy. These individuals can be awakened or sensitized only through discipline. This discipline takes many forms of expression but the most effective seems to be obstruction and denial. These are both negative conditions, you say. But spiritual laziness is the most negative of them all and it takes another negative condition to produce repulsion. Repulsion, though negative, is active. It produces activity and what follows upon such repulsion is very important. Just what we will do about it depends upon our soular growth. Those who have evolved to the point of having a well-controlled astral body will have developed well-controlled emotions and the seed-atoms or essence of these will be absorbed by the Ego for future use. When we fully realize that nothing in life is wasted ... that every experience is utilized ... how glorious and important every moment of life becomes!

He who says, "What does it matter?" does not realize the absurdity of that remark. All things DO matter ... but in relative importance. There would be little or no purpose in our living, whether on this planet or in any other state of existence, unless living DID matter. Not a single life is lived in vain regardless of the surroundings and circumstances attending a given individual.

How often has one said: "What a pity such people should live" when they have seen a monstrosity of some kind. Rather, their remark should have been: "Too bad that Ego has had to learn in such a difficult way." Were we permitted to trace back some of the incarnations of that individual we might be astonished to discover its identity.

Gifted with talents but using none of them ... just drifting with the tide and planning nothing. How could an Ego develop talents and then not use them? ... that, you say is unlikely ... yet: look about you everywhere, you will find unused talents wheresoever you look.

When we have a talent or faculty and use it not, what happens? It atrophies through lack of use or exercise. It corrodes, sometimes

even disintegrates. Only through USE does a talent become a part of our soular and spiritual structure. If we have developed a faculty and talent in a given incarnation and never again use that talent in subsequent times and lives ... it gradually fades away and disintegrates. Maybe you say this doesn't seem right to you but ... ponder. What creates or develops any faculty or talent? NECESSITY and USE. On the physical plane all our faculties have evolved because of necessity and they are all refined and sensitized through USE ... and nothing else.

Lets have an illustration: The co-ordination of your entire body is due to use. Stop using any part of your body and what happens? You lose co-ordinated action. No matter how skilled you may become in anything ... stop working at it for any length of time ... and you gradually lose your skill. Eventually, the faculty and ability whether it be drawing, music, sewing, craftsmanship or anything else ... becomes limited or useless.

The purpose of digressing from the subject of how well we use our various vehicles or "bodies" after the "great change" is to emphasize the importance of utilizing all our faculties here and now in order to carry over with us better and more perfected tools when we reach higher planes of use and expression. We perfect our tools on the earth plane ... to use them on the spiritual plane.

The earth plane is our training school because it supplies resistance that strengthens not only our physical structure but our mental and spiritual fibre as well. It cannot be stressed too strongly, or too often ... the importance of what you acquire and develop inwardly, to the state of your future growth and well-being, not only "here" but on the inner planes of being too.

*So many individuals go through physical life looking forward to the day of their physical release because they think that "over there," meaning the spiritual side of life, things will be different ... because "there" they will be everything they have wished to be and to have. How sadly disappointed these good folks will be for they will not be going to any other world than what they have created within for themselves.*

Do you really believe an individual who is embittered, resentful, revengeful and unloved ... will be happy, loved, and joyous after he makes the "great change"? Companions: *We carry our world with us where'er we go!* This applies to us not only physically but emotionally and spiritually as well. Remember that when we discard our physical bodies or vehicles, we are taking with us the same etheric and astral bodies we possessed while incarnate on this side; the same mental sheath and the same Ego.

We will return now to our original subject, the importance of what we do after repulsion has set in, when we have been moved from our state of complacency or crystallization. The law of repulsion is the first wedge used in the breaking up of crystallization. What we do with that wedge is important, for we act either constructively or destructively according to our state of evolution.

When something repels you, do you run away from it, or do you stop and study it and try to discover why it repels you and then, if it

is because of something wrong ... do you try to correct the condition or thing? This is a very important question for it not only applies to us individually but to the whole of life itself.

If we but knew it, the law of repulsion is one of man's greatest blessings, for that law is an incentive and a propulsion to progress and change. Not until we are touched either by attraction or repulsion do we take action. Both can be equally constructive, equally good ... it just depends upon what we do with either one. *It is the same law manifesting in its two polarities!*

When we make the "great change" and review our life activities, this law of attraction & repulsion, or polarity, is very active, because it functions through the astral body, or Plastic Envelope. Of all our vehicles (the "bodies several" as Saint Paul calls them), the astral body is the most sensitive to the law of polarity, because our emotions respond instantly to the two extremes of attraction & repulsion. That is why many, before giving a new idea careful consideration, are instantly attracted or repelled by the new idea, sometimes simply because it is new. It is their astral body that has passed that judgement, not the mind. Frequently, the mind accepts the idea when it has had an opportunity to work upon it and "think it over." And yet ... that astral reaction was probably right ... and subsequent events often prove it to have been true. We frequently say "It was my intuition" or a "hunch." It truly was. It registered through the astral body because the astral body is quick to sense and register all "feeling" or messages the soul receives from the Ego. One translates to the other, according to its ability to receive and transmit.

When we are in the spiritual planes ... feelings, impressions and thoughts are all intermingled, just as they are on the physical plane. Only one thing is different: resistance is absent (as we ordinarily think of resistance). Then and there it is that we discover the reality of thought: *that thoughts are things* just as matter is to us while on the physical plane.

At first we are bewildered and somewhat overwhelmed by this realization for, on earth, it was so difficult to convey our thoughts accurately to others. In fact, sometimes it was impossible. On the hinterside of life we discover that our thoughts are being read as though we had actually spoken them.

Just as on earth we had to be very careful how we expressed our thoughts in words spoken or written ... on the "other side" we have to be careful, perhaps for the first time, how we think because our thoughts take form and life. Then we discover that what we feel and what we think are very important because we can see the form and life these take at once. Then it is that we are taught how to use our minds and how to direct and control our feelings. We enjoy this schooling and believe we have reached the point where further experience on earth, where we can test our skills acquired ... can be taken up.

We feel sure we have acquired sufficient ability on the spiritual side, or planes, to apply what we have learned on the physical plane. So the great desire to return, test and prove our ability to correct so many things that we have learned were wrong, takes hold of us. We want to "go back" and, as you term it ... "make good." We want

to put into operation so much that we have learned while in the World of Reality. We feel certain we can do so many things better ... not only than we did them before ... but better still than they are being done by others who are on earth at the time when we are still in the Spirit.

With this urge we return then, but, alas, that creative virgin urge to put into active operation the valuable things we have learned ... gradually becomes weaker and distorted through our environmental resistance and the truths we acquired and thought we were so sure of ... become foggy images in our minds and distorted out of all semblance and recognition. Again, we have allowed the physical to bind us down. One thing remains, however, one spark has not been lost and that was the fact that something had to be done. ... So we bring back this tiny light: what we think and feel is important ... but in coming back into the physical world it has acquired the illusion of matter ... and therein lies our greatest test.

We have allowed our surroundings to dominate us ... instead of dominating our surroundings ... as was our intent, while in the Spirit.

We forget so much as we become more and more engrossed in our material needs and cares that our original reason for returning has become lost, or so buried that it cannot express or impel us strongly enough. The poet Robert Browning said it this way -

But friends,  
Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise  
From outward things, whate're you may believe.

There is an inmost center in us all,  
Where truth abides in fullness; and all around  
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hemms it in  
This perfect, clear perception ... which is truth.  
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh  
Binds it, and makes all error: and to KNOW  
Rather consists in opening out a way  
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,  
Than in effecting entry for a light  
Supposed to be without.

William Wordsworth phrased it like this -

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar;  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing Boy,  
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
He sees it in his joy;  
The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
Must Travel, still is Nature's priest,  
And by the vision splendid

Is on his way attended;  
At length the Man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.

Study and meditation on these two beautiful verses will amply repay the effort.

So ... our urges do express in part, but in so doing, there is the feeling that the individual's way is the only right way, be it what it may. *What originally suggested the conviction has been buried under a veritable mountain of tradition, custom, national and racial ideas, educational misconception and personal prejudice.* How to release that spark from all this encumbrance is indeed an undertaking.

We are all "bound" by the many limitations we have created for ourselves. The world as it is today, is the product of our labours. The forms of government and the economic systems are the results of our own activity. They are our brainchildren. We have been the builders of our yesterdays, our todays and we are now in the process of building our tomorrows. Those who inhabit the earth now are the builders of the future. *Think of what this means!* It means that what you - me - we - are individually doing NOW ... is the most important moment of our whole existence thus far.

Crystallization is fast being broken up, not in just one country alone, nor in one city, but around the planet. This means that a vast change is taking place upon the face of our earth, a change that will materially alter its appearance in many ways. It is a change that we, as individuals, are bringing about. We are reaching the point where the great wedge of repulsion, (war), is breaking up old forms, - but that question of what we do after repulsion sets in is very important. It faces us as a collective question. We have faced conditions as individuals, *now we must face this law as a group*, because, as a group, we have set still other laws into operation that must be worked out and utilized.

Are we going to turn our backs on what is before us ... or are we going to find out what is wrong and correct it ... **TOGETHER?**

It is easy to say that the reason for all our upheaval and chaos is due to human greed, personal ambition and thirst for power. It is easy to blame individuals and nations for the present situation. Such blaming, is part of the activity of the law of repulsion. We feel great repulsion toward those whom we consider responsible for existing conditions. That repulsion is in fact healthy if it precipitates an answer to the most vital question "What are we going to do about it?" You may say you cannot change the world ... and that *this* is a world condition. True. But there is one thing that each individual CAN institute and no amount of defense preparation can destroy or stop it - and that is vital, constructive thought. Thought is indestructible and before any constructive action can be taken *constructive thought*

must precede it.

What is constructive thought? If each group of people believe that theirs is the better, or only way, are they not engaged in constructive thinking, according to their individual light? And yet - their way may be detrimental to another nation. You can answer your own question: Constructive thought hurts no one but uplifts and helps everyone.

Before we can change the world we must change ourselves individually. Our thoughts must be creative, constructive and free from prejudice. A prejudiced thought is not constructive because it is not free - it is bound. It is bound to and by the prejudice. And so we return to the opening question of our theme, "Who is right?" and "Why is this?"

Any individual or group of people who have for their motive, objective or plan the subjugation of another, or of other groups of people, without thought of the well-being, progress and happiness of the people with whom they are dealing, but only of their own selfish ends ... are certainly not following constructive thought and action. What such groups and individuals do not seem to "remember", because they have become so bound to matter, is that ... the difficulties they are imposing upon others, *nations or individuals*, ... they themselves will come back to live in.

Governments now, that through a sense of injury wish to impose penalties upon other governments or individuals, will have the privilege and opportunity of coming back in subsequent incarnations to reap the product of their own previous activity. So when we think or believe that we are imposing obstacles and difficulties upon another, we are simply imposing them upon ourselves. The world we are creating for the future is the world we will inhabit in a subsequent incarnation. If we think and act unconstructively, we are not only preparing a world for our children and grandchildren to suffer in, but also to return to ourselves ...and then and there pay off the karma we will be accumulating. And "no one shall come out thence until he has paid the uttermost farthing," is how the Great Book puts it.

Perhaps this is a good thought we all might remember to our advantage: The Golden Rule can work both ways. It might well be given, "Whatsoever ye do unto men, they also shall do unto you." And this appears to be well substantiated in every day life. We must come back to whatsoever we have built and are building for the future. That future is in our own hands. So, it is in very truth that we build our futures, not only spiritually but physically as well. It is all very well to lay up treasures in the spiritual heaven but we would do far better to remember that heaven exists right here and now and it is worth our while to lay up treasure here that is equally immune to moth and rust and which no one can break into and steal. We all belong to the same wave of human evolution that is now expressing and must be perfected by suffering and experience to whatsoever it is destined to be.

Constructive thought always precedes constructive action! Remember that at all times. No general enters combat without a definite

plan of attack. No one should attempt the battle of life, - for self-improvement, welfare of those about them, self-control, balance and progress, without a definite plan of action and approach. Yet we universally make the great mistake of *going into action before going into thought*. Understanding that we don't have to look very far for the reason for our chaotic conditions. Emotions released and set into action without thought is a daily error made by many.

"How can we, as Students of Truth, stimulate constructive thought among our fellow-men?" The answer is simple: By thinking constructively ourselves. Above all, avoid hasty judgements and try to overcome prejudices, be they personal or national.

People, generally speaking, are short sighted. They do not look very far ahead. They think almost in terms of hours. Look at the present daily processes overstuffed with archaisms and obsolete formulae - in business, economics, social, intellectual and spiritual life. The New Order of the Ages now undergoing its birth-pains will cause more suffering to those whose minds are not elastic to new ideas than to those who adapt themselves readily to anything that will foster expansion and growth, both of the Nation and of the individual.

It is important to realize this: The tomorrow we are building is not merely the transient period of the balance of our individual life-expression, or our immediate generation. (If that were all, then humanity would now be in a process of total suicide.) We are building the tomorrow that historians a thousand years hence will review as one of this planet's greatest and most momentous periods. Science will liberate forces hitherto unknown ... and human greed will, as usual, at first work much suffering in its attempts to sober nature to its selfishness. But then the constructive spirit will triumph and mankind will go on and into vistas of evolved mentalism, spiritual insight and applied power ... and the two worlds, seen and unseen, will draw closer together than ever before in man's history.

Some may still complain, "Well, what good will all this do for me? I won't be here to see this wonderful time or take part in it." Are you quite sure friend? Where were you before you came here, and whence came you? I ask this because I have never yet met a person who could conceive of a time when he or she was not. Plenty there are who can remember back only so far, but none who can comprehend a time of non-existence except in theory. Every one who participates constructively in the building of tomorrow will not only experience that tomorrow ... he cannot escape it even if he would. That too, is part of karma.

Never is man or cosmos the same one second after another. That is a definition of motion in one sense and, as you know, everything is in a state of continuous motion. None of us are the same from one second to another. Minute changes are undergone and tomorrow is always the newest status whether measured by minutes or milliards.

You are building this moment, while listening to this statement. You are building by the attitude of mind in which you receive it.

Keep the tremendous importance of tomorrow in mind - always-

tomorrow presents itself to us momentarily, tomorrow is always becoming tomorrow ... somewhere. Anticipate tomorrow by doing the best you can - today - NOW!

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Dear Companions:

#94

I am going to talk to you about "The Brittle Aura" ...but first let me say this - It is difficult for earth-dwellers to place themselves in a position to see the position from the "other side" of life; that, however, is exactly what I am going to strive to do tonight, thus making the picture complete.

Right now the world needs these teachings as never before ... as never before in all its history. Out of the present morass of darkness and misery LIGHT will survive ... *survive because of the tireless efforts of those not only on the physical side of life, but in the Unseen as well.*

We are constantly striving to help man see the Light, but the realization must come from *within* man himself. We can help plant the seed, but the cultivation and growth is entirely personal. You, on the physical plane, must do likewise ... plant the seed and wait for its fruition. You cannot hasten the growth of another, but you can help it, through proper nourishment. You can take an emancipated body and rebuild it through proper nourishment, exercise, sunshine and fresh air. The body grows by itself, when you provide the needed elements and proper environment. In other words, you help it through intelligent living.

**The same law applies to the mental and spiritual vehicles of man. The growth is from within, but you can render powerful help through proper nourishment, exercise, sunshine and fresh air.** What are the correspondences of these in the realms of Mind and Spirit? Truth, understanding, kindness, love ..... what a pathway of opportunity and upbuilding they offer!

You speak about these things; you write about them; but - how much of them do you live? That is what counts! Nothing matters except that you live of what you know and believe.

The living of a principle gives life to it, otherwise it is dead. The principles for which our Order stands will survive in ages to come only to the extent that you who are living on the earth today - NOW - make them vital, pulsating principles in your daily living.

When you pass through the veil, the ever-burning question is not "What did I say?" "What did I believe?" but - "What did I do?" "What did I live?" "What did I do with the great opportunity given me - life itself?" WHEN LIFE IS REGARDED AS AN OPPORTUNITY ... AND NOT AS A BIOLOGICAL HAPPENING ... IT WILL THEN BEGIN TO MEAN SOMETHING TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL.

Brothers and Sisters, please spread the truth that life itself

is the most glorious opportunity ever given and that every moment of it is precious, whether it be on your side of the veil, or on ours. It is all ONE.

Before one can make life worth living, one must understand one's place in it. Then, come what may, it is all lived with new light, new purpose, new vision.

Hitherto man has regarded his physical body with disdain, and in misguided religious fervour has even mutilated it to serve his God better. Poor children of earth! Why do you believe you have a body? *It is a tool to be used, improved, repaired, looked after and kept fit for the habitation of the Divine Spark!*

You would not consider entertaining guests in an unclean, disordered home. Why do less with your bodies than you would do with your house? The body is the temporary home of the Ego. It is everybody's duty to make this Temple or home worthy of the occupant. We refer not to vanity but to health, cleanliness, vitality, strength, courage, resistance to disease, co-ordination of every muscle . . . . These physical qualities have mental and spiritual counterparts and correspondences. Man is forever developing one vehicle at the expense of another. Man should develop all his vehicles synchronously and neglect none. They are all-important for the proper functioning of the Ego - or Spirit.

The more man aligns himself with God, the greater his vital living on all planes becomes. Those who think they have aligned themselves with God and then live fruitless lives, wasted lives, are deceiving themselves only . . . no one else. "*By their fruits ye shall know them*" is the only true guage; it is the guage of results.

Living . . . to become worthwhile . . . must be active, not passive. Constructive, not destructive. Vital, not stagnant. This living applies to all planes. None should be neglected at the expense of the others. All must work together. It is this lack of co-ordination of man's three vehicles that causes unbalanced living, spiritual unbalance and unhappiness.

When an Ego is in full command of the body, mind and soul, it is then on the King's Highway of Life and not until then. Previous to that it is only on the by-paths. But not on the King's Highway itself.

Full command! What is full command? . . . Complete control, command of one's self. Not just the body, but the mind and soul. Then and only then can the Spirit of man -- his Ego, do its real work.

Realize that man's body, mind and soul are merely tools or vehicles for the Ego to function with and through. At present, man is permitting these tools to be the commanders instead of the servers. All this brings us to the subject, "How can man gain greater control of his vehicles?" . . . By constantly living the high principles he believes in. By constantly living the high principles he believes in. He must LIVE them. No other course is open. They must be lived. Every time a principle is lived it becomes a part of you and enriches your being on

every plane. To have ideals and not live up to them is cosmic waste and cosmos abhors waste, for waste in any form ... is ignorance.

In his ignorance, man believes he has control of himself by placing a hard exterior, first to his body; then to his mind, by appearing immovable; and third, to his soul by seeming and appearing to be unemotional. He then feels pride; he is in full command of himself. Nothing can reach him! Nothing can touch him! Yes -- he is right -- nothing can touch him, nothing can reach him. He is a slave to himself. He is imprisoned within himself and knows it not. He has a brittle aura. He is a sad spectacle ... and is ignorant of the fact.

Life gives abundantly, generously, - but man, in his ignorance, sees it not. There is in each one of you the most precious treasure in the world -- a treasure of limitless supply. It is there, waiting to be tapped, waiting to be used ... and yet ye seek everywhere else for it ... and wonder why ye find it not.

Man complicates his life so unnecessarily. Simplicity of living is a sign of greatness; a sign of growth, - of soul growth. All great souls have, and do, live simply. Look about you and see.

The brittle aura! Does that name surprise you? Just as the skin on your physical body is an outer covering or casing, containing the physical organs, &c., of the physical body, and protecting them from outer friction ... so the aura, in its own way, is the skin or outer covering of the astral body of man.

Probably you have never thought of it in this light ... but the human aura is, to a large extent, the key to the soul, for through that aura one reaches or rather, reads the soul of another.

Man's protective instinct is caused and developed through fear ... fear of the unknown. The same applies to the aura. Emotional fear will cause a brittle aura. The aura is normally hardened, like a skin, but a brittle aura is one that is fragile, easily broken or wrenched apart, leaving openings through which other influences can reach in or penetrate. Normally the aura is hardened as a protector. Protector of what, did you ask? A self-created protector that is opposite to the brittleness we bring about in opening ourselves to fear and all its syndromes.

The reason why I bring up the brittle aura at this time is because it is the greatest obstacle to spiritual growth. Those having brittle auras not only have to help themselves from within, but strangely, they have to be helped from without. They have locked themselves within, but part of the key is without.

Does this seem paradoxical?

When your physical skin is very dry it becomes brittle; it cracks easily and you bleed from within; friction from without is painful for it causes further cracking or splitting of the skin. I am referring to diseased skin or infected skin. You correct this condition both internally and externally through proper regulation of diet, medical aid and the application of soothing, healing oils or salves to

the outer skin. The same law applies to the aura. The inner healing comes from within; the outer from our environment and outer experiences. But the real healing always is from within; the outer is only a help, not a cure.

Man, at present, is in the process of building three vehicles at the same time. The most perfected so far, is his physical structure. His astral body is far from perfect and far from under control.

The human aura is not only akin to the physical covering or skin of man in its functions to the astral body, but it is far more than that. *The human aura is the radiation or emanation of electronic energy as contained in each vehicle.* This radiation or emanation is either in control of the astral or it is not. Either it controls the astral, or it is controlled by the astral body, according to individual development. The human aura is both physical and spiritual ... just as electricity is both physical and spiritual.

The human aura not only indicates the vitality of the body, but the vitality of the soul as well. It is an emanation of a radioactive nature and envelopes all of man's vehicles. The human aura can, therefore, be called man's spiritual skin; it is sensitive to both inner and outer impacts. It can be translucent, opaque, thick, heavy, light, radiant, thin as tissue and impenetrable as the strongest steel at the same time. It can be porous as a sponge, brittle as glass, and soggy as mud. In colours, there is no limit to what it can produce by way of variations ... for colour is vibration and the aura feeds on vibration and produces vibration. Another paradox!

Just as your physical skin protects and receives, so the human aura protects and receives likewise. Both sympathy and antipathy are sensed through the aura. *Personal magnetism and the human aura are close companions.* As control over our vehicles increases, personal magnetism has greater facility for expression and the human aura increases its power of extension and influence.

You feel the influence of a person through the aura. The Great Master who was called the Christ had an aura that extended tremendously and could be sensed for miles.

The aura is, in reality, the radiance of the soul. Many labour in the fear of obsession and all that it implies. FEAR itself is the easiest channel for an obsessing entity to use.

Remember that love and fear cannot exist together. **Love** is the greatest power there is. He who truly radiates love, (not *sensitivity* or its many equivalents), but true, whole hearted **LOVE** ... fears nothing.

The brittle aura is becoming more and more common because of the increase of fear, doubt, confusion, greed, and the many human failings that man is indulging in at the present time. Fear develops brittle auras to a most confusing degree and extent, and therefore, when an Ego comes over to our side under such conditions, it is not only physically blasted but spiritually so, as well.

The person with a healthy, normal aura finds it possible to associate with all types of people. He who can associate only with a limited group has the answer in his aura. Many who have studied the human aura, pride themselves on their ability of being so sensitive that they can associate only with those who are in complete harmony with themselves. The truly evolved person is in control and is not controlled by. ... That is why the Great Master was able to associate with all sorts of people ... from social nobodys and those who had disorganized auras ... and brought order and love into their lives.

*The brittle aura is the product of fear, doubt, uncertainty, greed, jealousy, hatred, malicious gossip, envy, &c.. Everytime any one indulges in these, everytime you indulge in these ... the aura becomes brittle, fragile, and as a result fractures, leaving gaps here and there; these are points or places of least resistance and openings where many things may enter. If these negative qualities are indulged in constantly and frequently, it becomes more and more difficult to soften the aura, and its natural state becomes so crystalized that it becomes permanently brittle. Then you have a truly self-imprisoned soul.*

"How can you help such a condition?" you ask. *The answer is so simple it is often one of the most difficult things to do:*

**by expressing LOVE.**

Love has many by-paths: It has kindness, compassion, sympathy, real understanding, consideration, patience, thoughtfulness . . . . .

*Take the most brittle aura and apply these qualities from without ... and stimulate the intent and purpose to change from within ... and your brittle aura will quickly become soft, pliable and strong.*

The human aura is an index to the soul.

Every world-saviour who has ever come to earth, has preached **one truth**. It has been phrased in various ways to suit humanity's intelligence and evolution, but it all can be condensed into one simple mantra: **the all inclusive power of LOVE.** And man, in his ignorance, has tried everything else instead.

We on this side can give you no greater message than this:

**Radiate LOVE in all your activities.**

It can be done. It should be done. It **MUST** be done.

For "As above, so below."

The human mind is in a state of mutation, from a crystalized attitude of materialism to a more fluid and plastic state of spiritual anticipation. Man has not succeeded entirely, by any manner of means, in breaking up his crystalized mental and intellectual status, but he has discovered that something "must be added to" his rigid ideas that only what he can see, feel, hear, taste or smell, can be real. He is willing to concede that all else may have a little bit of truth in it

but he also strongly believes that almost everything outside the realm of the physical senses is mostly illusion or imaginary.

So when we warn about the "brittle aura" there may be some who will wonder if it is possible that there is such a thing and, if so, how do we know anything about it?

Quite outside the field of those who have developed clairvoyant sight, the human aura can clearly be seen by anyone equipped with dicyanine cells through which to look. This is an accepted physical fact and even now the technique is being used in reputable hospitals in England for diagnostic purposes.

The point is, through using these dicyanine cells, the idea of a broken aura can be proved. From the diagnostic perspective they are of great value because wherever an organ, especially a vital one, is weak or diseased, a pronounced break, thinness or complete absence of auric emanations over the area is noticeable.

This being true with the purely physical aspect of the human aura, how much more true it is of the spiritual aura ... for no one can be a student of Spiritual Science very long without having the truth borne upon them that *for every physical condition there is a pre-existing spiritual condition*.

The causes that affect the spiritual aura, as already stated, are the intensity of the human emotions and these, it is well known, can readily affect the physical well-being of a person too. (This is the area of psychosomatic medicine.) So, if the causes of breaks in our spiritual aura develop from spiritual and emotional sources, the cure must clearly come from that side as well. The obvious cure consists in changing, eliminating or modifying those inner emotional or spiritual causes

They must be transmuted from the wrong type of expression, to the right expression. This is what I have tried to point out to you in the earlier paragraphs. There is an old saying about "loving not wisely but too well" and the result is said to be disastrous. That is, by loving with what passes for love but seldom is the real virtue. Control of our lives, our passions, and our fears ... our emotions generally ... is what will heal the broken aura and exhibit a complete, perfectly functioning auric envelope. For the aura has a special function to perform for the astral and etheric vehicles, just as the skin has for the healthy physical organism. They correlate. Let me illustrate:

Do you remember the story of the Roman Emperor who had been awarded a triumph and in whose honour some little children had been covered with gold leaf to signify the return of plenty and the Golden Age? The children died. Neither the skin nor the aura could function and being obstructed, death ensued.

It is the aura that makes people appear to you as they do. You have phrases like: "How I wish I could get under his skin." "I wish I could break through that barrier he keeps around himself and contact the real person." &c. What you mean is that you wish you could break through an unusually hard aura and reach the person's emotional nature.

Then some people have a spongy aura and when you are with them, even though you like them immensely, you feel devitalized. Such persons are almost vampires but don't know it ... the spongy or porous aura they have developed absorbs yours and you feel a sense loss. Remember what the Nazarene Master said when the woman touched the hem of his garment: "I perceive that virtue is gone out of me."

A brittle aura always indicates some obstruction in your spiritual vehicles which is bound, if not corrected, to show up in the physical body, or in your outward attitude toward your fellow-beings. That is why some people whom we know and respect are said to be "difficult" to get along with. It may be owing to some repression or inhibition due to false pride, diffidence or self-consciousness ... preventing a free, spontaneous and natural expression of the real personality and a truly good disposition previously unsuspected.

We speak of something as brittle when it breaks or crushes easily. Do you know of people in your own circle of friends and acquaintances who answer to that description? They break easily when some serious matter arises, even though it is not nearly a crisis. Do they not seem easily crushed in spirit and temperament too? Now some of them have a sufficient resilience to rise again quickly, and they do. This is because their emotional surge passes swiftly and they return easily to a normal attitude of mind and begin, even though unconsciously, to reconstruct. Others, however, stay crushed for days, in spite of all you try to do for them. I shall have something more to say about this in my next address to you, which will be called "How to Heal a Broken Aura," for the aura can be healed, just as well as any part of the physical corpus. Unfortunately, not many know when they have a broken aura so they do nothing about it. This always leads to trouble. Any neglected portion of the vehicles, spiritual as well as physical, requires prompt attention when the distress signal is displayed ... the signal is pain: mental or physical.

It is a common trait among humans to neglect that which they may know ... but do not always see. Even though it is right before the eye - it is often overlooked, - "not seen." Just because you do not always, or perhaps ever, see the auras of your friends, (or even remotely suspect that you have one of your own), is no reason to ignore its existence. When you feel "out of sorts, down in the mouth, under the weather or completely let down," as these sayings go, just remember that the reason may come from the spiritual base, and while you may not be able to see your own aura even in the mirror ... set about examining your mental state, your emotions, your attitudes, angers, rages, yearnings, urges, hopes, wishes and desires. See if they are in keeping with what a normal attitude of mind should be. Sometimes you can effect a wholesome cure this way, that drenches of medicines, tonics, laxatives, &c, could never accomplish. Cures that can be brought about normally, i.e., by giving nature a chance to make the repairs, will cause no violent reactions.

Keep this thought of your aura and its health in your mind and see if you cannot come into closer consciousness of it. You have been given the methods in earlier pages and you can do much with them for yourself, if you will.

May the love of the Great Ones weave your aura into the shining seamless garment that betokens true inner vision and consciousness.

QUESTIONS ... (write your answers alongside.)

What is the human aura?

What is its function and why the need of it?

What is a 'brittle aura' and how does it become brittle?

What outstanding spiritual principle have you gained from studying this lesson?

Do you begin to understand more clearly why we recommend the introspection exercise on retiring?

Has this lesson opened your eyes more to the importance of watching what you think, feel and do?

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SEEING THE AURA

The aura is not so difficult to see if you will *look for it!* If you are at a position to observe a person as he is walking under a bright light, especially a florescent light, you may easily see the aura around his head. The 'trick' is not to look at the aura ... look at his head, and the aura will be seen peripherally. Also, if a person is sitting or standing against a neutral-coloured background, the aura may be seen. Again, do not look AT the aura, look at the person, the aura will be seen with your peripheral vision. As said above, the aura, in fact, is not so difficult to see if you will practice looking for it!

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NOTES FOR STUDENTS TO REMEMBER - #S1

Martinism is a way of life, or a doctrine or a system of Mystic Chivalry based on a particular teaching of the origins of Man, of his place in Creation, and on the relationship existing between God, Man and Nature. Its aim is the Reintegration of Man (mankind) with his First Estate. It proposes to achieve this aim in two ways:

- 1) By the regeneration of Mankind through the regeneration of the individuals.
- 2) By the removal of the forces that manintain Mankind in its present state of exile.

"INITIATION! Extraordinary power of the divine afflatus which radiates from the hands, creates priest or adept and communicates the understanding and potential possession of the sciences! Magical virtue situated on the extreme bordeline of the natural and supernatural!

Miraculous and impalpable agent that is given without dividing, that passes from person to person without losing its potency and preserves intact its action which remains infallible, but which develops its full power only in the mind ready to nurture it! Subtle current of a vital fluid which animates the member of the mystical body!"

Saint-Martin entrusted to his disciples The Initiation, that it may grow in him who was worthy to receive it, and purify him who was not yet thus prepared. In his work The New Man, Saint-Martin writes: "If the power of Initiation does not give visible results, it nevertheless works infallibly as a preventative, and prepares the shell of him who remains pure, to receive salutary impressions when the spirit deems it advisable."

Saint-Martin was inspired by Abbadie, Burlamaqui, Martines Pasquales and Jacob Boehme.

Man's most important endeavour is to know himself. This he discovers by observing his own behaviour, thoughts, tendencies, reactions, hopes, likes, dislikes, &c., &c..

According to Aristotle, *wondering about things* is the beginning of philosophy. Wonder takes us away from materialism. Everything is a subject of wonder! In the process of self-study, wonder is the link that unites Man, the observer ... to Man, the object of observation. The first wonders at the other. *The true mystic has an infinite capacity to wonder.*

Self-study reveals that Man is rarely an integrated being, that he is made of many "I's" functioning on different planes, and fighting for pre-eminence. **The most essential virtue in practising self-study is SINCERITY.**

Saint-Martin advocates the study of Man. Such a study reveals that Man is a dual being who can think and feel and who can thus realise that he is in a state of exile or privation.

The three phases of Man's realization of Self are:

- 1) Discovery in himself of a "Superior Principle."
- 2) Consequent realization of the misery of his present condition.
- 3) Logical conclusion that at one time Man lost the state of bliss that was his.

Coming to the realization of the Fall of Man and the consequent predicament in which we find ourselves ... the need arises of attempting to regain our First Estate or Lost Paradise.

Of the two ways by which Reintegration may be accomplished, Louis-Claude de Saint Martin favoured the Inner Way, which is the interior development of Man's spirituality and union with his Center. Martines Pasqualez advocated The Operative Way, that is, by directly acting, through theurgic operations, on the forces that are keeping Man away from his First Estate.

The whole of the Martinist Doctrine rests on the premise that Man's first achievement and endeavour along the Path of Reintegration must be directed towards **self-knowledge and self-realization**.

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### Supernumerary lecture #26

### THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

Have you ever realized that today is the most important time in all your life, a "red-letter day," almost like the beginning of a new year? We should be saying, "Happy New You!" What am I talking about? I'm talking about the fact that today is the first day of the rest of your life -- an exciting day, an important day. And of course, so is every day.

I love the words of Thomas Carlyle: "Every day that is born into the world comes like a burst of music and rings itself all the day through; and thou shalt make of it a dance, a dirge, or a life march, as thou wilt....The poorest day that passes over us is the conflux of two eternities, the junction of the eternal past and the eternal future." This is an imaginative way of putting it, because eternity is an indivisible unity, and time is not a passing phenomenon but the unfolding of Infinite possibility.

There's an important lesson in watching a gust of wind blow away last year's dead leaves. Each leaf epitomizes the plan of the Universe. Everything, we realize, is formed according to plan and moves in a pattern, Divine and creative. The stars, the planets, the blood in our veins, the seasons, day and night, the phases of the moon -- all are part of this Universal plan. With an instrument we can graph the musical vibrations of a symphony and see a very definite pattern. Stories and paintings, in a way, all have a design as unique as a snowflake or the contents of a drop of water. Even the rise and fall of nations and civilizations, and the fluctuations of the stock market, have rhythmical design, and this is likewise true of your life and mine. Although we may not always be able to recognize it, and indeed may not want to look for it, there is design and pattern in our lives, cause and effect, plan and purpose. We are often so close to our experiences that we cannot see this, but peering into our past, we can see how things are directing us to a certain end.

Shakespeare says, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will." Am I referring to predestination? Isn't it strange that people may reject predestination theologically, but still say, "Well, what will be, will be; there's no use fighting fate." Actually, the Bible speaks of a form of predestination. Paul, in Romans 8:29, says: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son." Now, this means that the ultimate goal of all life is set; with each of us created in God's image-likeness, it is foreordained that we will ultimately manifest it in the outer appearance. But human destiny -- the way of attainment, the path we take of achievement -- this goal is shaped by our actions, thoughts, ideals, aspirations, will, and reaction to the experiences that confront us.

No, we are not talking about predestination but rather of predisposition. Consider that each individual is predisposed toward that which is good and creative, and it is there even though he may suppress and frustrate this tendency. Much confusion experienced by individuals results from this frustration of potentiality. We might ask, "Is it not so that some people are destined to be great, to do great work?" Well, if Thomas Edison was destined to be the wizard of electricity, that would mean that he functioned under a special dispensation and that he had available certain aids not usually possessed by men. If so, then why did he have so many failures, and

why did he have to work so hard and so long? Tradition holds that Jesus was predestined to become the Messiah, but if so, then why was He tempted in the wilderness? Why the agony of Gethsamene? Like us, He was predestined to become the Christ; the way of our achievement of this is up to each one of us. Jesus asserted His self-mastery and followed the road to victory; His entire Gospel challenges us to follow. However, the difference between Jesus and you and me is that although we are all predestined to become the Christ, Jesus was predisposed toward it. He had worked for a long time preparing Himself for this end, and it created certain mental habit patterns that led Him in the right direction.

Though the choice of human experience is always with man, and though we make mistakes that bring chaos, yet we can never lose the Divine catalyst of Spirit which forever works to bring harmony out of discord. An organist may accidentally strike the wrong key, but if he is skillful he improvises and resolves the dissonances into harmony which sounds like an interesting turn in the music, and the listener assumes that is the way it was intended. There is in life that which I call the Divine law of adjustment, always turning mistakes into good. All things work together for good! Looking back, we can see how some horrible errors were resolved into something propitious. Examining a pattern from the perspective of a distance makes it appear that that was the way it had to be. In this sense, there will be a good design in everything in your life that takes place -- beginning with this, the first day of the rest of your life.

We cannot familiarize ourselves with this pattern in advance and be aware ahead of time of all this good, nor can we find any insurance against untoward circumstances other than the discipline of thought and faith. As long as we are involved in the contemporary world, with other human beings, there will be conflicts and changes. We can know, however, that regardless of what may happen around us to us, that we will hold fast to Truth. Thus, in the ultimate, everything that happens in this lifetime, everything that starts in this, the first day of the rest of our life, is going to reveal a beneficent pattern. This indicates the importance of seeking guidance from day to day, to keep in tune with that spiritual predisposition toward good. Isaiah says: "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, 'This is the way; walk ye in it,' when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."

As you go forward into this, the next part of your life that is beginning with today, you have the assurance that nothing is fixed and final except that, come what may, the Divine of you will somehow find its way, through that little spark which you cannot quite lose. As you are confronted by experiences, think of them as substance before you. Nothing is fixed. Stars or cards cannot indicate what is good or bad for you. As Shakespeare says, "There is nothing good or ill, but thinking makes it so."

We can change ourselves. We can make of every experience what we will. We may not be able to prevent things happening, for in this, many states of consciousness are involved. But don't overlook the possibility of a consciousness of protection! You certainly can, by your attitude, determine what something will be to you, how you are going to accept it. You can call it good and know that you have something going for you; you can be predisposed toward the good. Most important of all, know that you have the courage and the power and the wisdom and the guidance to press on through every experience. As Paul says, "In all of these things, we are more than conquerors."

Yes, today is the first day of the rest of your life. In this unfolding process of life before you there will be a pattern and design of that which is good, for the Divine law is working. Press on in the upward call and thus make of the pattern of this next phase of your life one that shows a definite upturn in the demonstration of that which is good. This is the first day of the rest of your life, so we say to you, "Happy New You!"

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